

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 14-15 and 23; add new claims 24-27, and amend the remaining claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A communications network comprising:
 - at least one communication virtualizer;
 - a plurality of network-attached store computers connected to said communication virtualizer, wherein said plurality of network-attached store computers are configured to appear as a single available network-attached store computer; and
 - at least one client computer connected to said communication virtualizer,
 - wherein said client computer is adapted to send requests for storage to said communication virtualizer,
 - wherein said requests for storage are transmitted as a series of packets, each packet comprising a portion of the request for storage,
 - wherein each packet comprises a packet sequence number,
 - wherein said packets comprising a similar request for storage are linked together using a request identifier, said packet sequence number, and a client identifier,
 - wherein each request for storage comprises a unique request identifier that is shared among said packets comprising said similar request, and
 - wherein each response packet from said store computers includes said client identifier.

2. (Currently Amended) The communications network ~~of~~ according to claim 1, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, further comprising an internal network of connection nodes connecting said communication virtualizer with said network-attached store computers.
3. (Currently Amended) The communications network ~~of~~ according to claim 1, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, further comprising a plurality of external network connections for facilitating a transfer of requests sent by said client computer to said communication virtualizer.
4. (Currently Amended) The communications network ~~of~~ according to claim 1, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, further comprising a plurality of external connection paths for facilitating direct communication between said network-attached store computers and said client computer.
5. (Currently Amended) The communications network ~~of~~ according to claim 1, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, further comprising an Ethernet networking hardware and medium access protocol for facilitating communication within said communication network.
6. (Currently Amended) The communications network ~~of~~ according to claim 1, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, further comprising a Transmission

Control Protocol / Internet Protocol suite for facilitating communication between said network-attached store computers and said client computer.

7. (Currently Amended) The communications network ~~of~~ according to claim 1, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, further comprising a storage access protocol for facilitating communication between a storage component within said communications network and remaining components within said communications network.

8. (Currently Amended) The communications network ~~of~~ according to claim 7, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, further comprising a storage access protocol comprises a Network File System protocol.

9. (Currently Amended) The communications network ~~of~~ according to claim 7, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, further comprising a storage access protocol comprises a Common Internet File System protocol.

10. (Currently Amended) The communications network ~~of~~ according to claim 1, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said communication virtualizer comprises a network router.

11. (Currently Amended) The communications network ~~of~~ according to claim 1, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, further comprising a communication virtualizer file switch connected to a client computer and a server computer

for sending requests from said client computer to said network-attached store and from said network-attached store back to said client computer.

12. (Currently Amended) A method of communication over a communications network, said method comprising:

sending requests for storage originated by at least one client computer over said communications network;

receiving said requests for storage in at least one communication virtualizer; ~~and~~

transmitting the received requests for storage to a plurality of network-attached store computers connected to said communication virtualizer, wherein said plurality of network-attached store computers are configured to appear as a single network-attached store computer, wherein said requests for storage are transmitted as a series of packets, each packet comprising a portion of the request for storage, wherein each packet comprises a packet sequence number, wherein said packets comprising a similar request for storage are linked together using a request identifier, said packet sequence number, and a client identifier, and wherein each request for storage comprises a unique request identifier that is shared among said packets comprising said similar request; and

transmitting, by said store computers, response packets to said communication virtualizer, wherein each of said response packets include said client identifier.

13. (Currently Amended) The method ~~of~~ according to claim 12, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said communication virtualizer, upon receiving requests from said client computer, transmits said request for storage to a chosen

network-attached store computer based on a capability of said chosen network-attached store computer to properly process said request for storage.

14 – 15. (Cancelled).

16. (Currently Amended) The method of according to claim 12, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said network-attached store computer is configured for:

- receiving said requests for storage from said communication virtualizer;
- processing said request for storage;
- creating a corresponding response to said request for storage;
- packetizing said corresponding response; and
- sending said corresponding response to said communication virtualizer.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of according to claim 16, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said communication virtualizer is configured for:

- receiving said corresponding response from said network-attached store computer;
- determining a chosen client computer to which said corresponding response should be routed to; and
- routing said corresponding response to a chosen client computer.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of according to claim 17, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said chosen client computer is configured for:

receiving said corresponding response from said communication virtualizer;
de-packetizing said corresponding response; and
routing said corresponding response to an initiating application.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of according to claim 12, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said packets are categorized from a zeroth (0th) packet to an *i*th packet.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of according to claim 19, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said communication virtualizer determines which network-attached store computer to transmit said request for storage to by examining said zeroth packet in said request.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of according to claim 19, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, further comprising:

said client computer sending standard Ethernet packets to said communication virtualizer; and

said communication virtualizer combining a plurality of standard Ethernet packets comprising a single request for storage into a single standard Ethernet packet.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of according to claim 21, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, further comprising:

said network-attached store computer sending a standard Ethernet packet to said communication virtualizer in reply to a client computer request; and

said communication virtualizer dividing said standard Ethernet packet into a plurality of standard Ethernet packets to send to said client computer as a response comprising multiple standard Ethernet packets.

23. (Cancelled).

24. (New) The communications network according to claim 1, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said communication virtualizer is adapted to translate a first protocol of said requests for storage to a second protocol different from said first protocol.

25. (New) The communications network according to claim 1, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said communication virtualizer is adapted to combine said packets into a single jumbo packet.

26. (New) The method according to claim 12, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said communication virtualizer is adapted to translate a first protocol of said requests for storage to a second protocol different from said first protocol.

27. (New) The method according to claim 12, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said communication virtualizer is adapted to combine said packets into a single jumbo packet.